

Aquidneck Island Corridor

at Middletown High School

June 9, 2003 from 6:30pm to 9:00pm

Approximately 10 residents from the Aquidneck Island corridor participated in a public workshop on June 9, 2003. The towns and cities represented by participants at the corridor were Middletown, Newport and Portsmouth. There were also representatives from the Rhode Island Association of Railroad Passengers, Portsmouth Planning Board, DOT Watch and the Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District.

Workshop Participants

- 3 had lived in the corridor more than 25 years
- 4 had lived in the corridor 15-25 years
- 1 had lived in the corridor 10-15 years
- 2 had lived in the corridor 5-10 years

Corridor Municipalities

- Little Compton
- Middletown
- Newport
- Portsmouth
- Tiverton

Major Roads of the Corridor

- **Route 24** – Major route to Providence. Saves time versus Route 95 and Newport Bridge for Portsmouth and some Middletown residents
- **Route 114**
 - Commonly referred to as **West Main Road**
 - Has more traffic than Route 138, which is a parallel alternate route
 - Tourist road
 - Used for shopping and work trips
 - Major artery of the island
 - More difficult driving than Route 138
- **Route 138**
 - Commonly referred to as **East Main Road**
 - Easier to drive than Route 114 with less traffic and better road conditions
 - Has scenic views
 - Road preferred by local residents
 - Has access to beaches
 - Used for shopping and work trips
 - More comfortable driving experience and slower speeds
 - Major artery for island travel
- **Route 81 and Route 77**
 - Route into Massachusetts
 - Rural road, access to beaches, Little Compton and Tiverton

Other Transportation Modes in the Corridor:

Ferry

- High speed service is seasonal from Newport to Providence

Rail

- Has limited potential on the island because of out-of-service bridge over Sakonnet River
- Used as a dinner train, tourist attraction

Airport

- Newport State Airport (located in Middletown) serves general aviation market, no scheduled airline service

Bus

- RIPTA Service to Providence at rush hour is excellent.
- Bonanza Buses provide access to Boston.
- Tour buses service cruise ships.
- Salve Regina service is good.
- Four bus routes within Island.
- Trolleys service Newport.

Bicycle

- Burma Rd. signed bike lanes along west side of island

Using the Corridor Roads

A high percentage of the residents of this area live and work within Corridor. Most of the participants used their cars as their main mode of transportation. Residents felt forced to use their cars to get them to **basic needs** and that the corridor is becoming very **suburbanized**. The car dependent residents used Route 114 and Route 138 to travel almost everywhere. There are few cross roads, so drivers are forced to drive along the main routes. The Sakonnet River Bridge carries more cars per day than the Newport Bridge, but Newport County has the highest percent of person who live and work in the same county.

There is limited use of other transportation modes. To commute to work, two participants used public transportation (one used RIPTA, the other Bonanza bus service). Residents used the ferry to Providence, but only for recreational and day trips, not commuting to work.

Positive Features of the Corridor

Route 138

- Views in Portsmouth
- A nice road that is a show piece of the island

Route 24

- A good alternative for Route 95 and Newport Bridge with less congestion

Ferry Service

- Good experience in public transportation
- Positive experience in Bay that can not otherwise be obtained on the roads in the corridor
- Opportunity for access to Providence for day visits and commuters
- No need to drive, less cars on road, visual corridor experience

Bus Service

- Can be great option to Providence, especially during rush hour commutes
- Bonanza bus to Boston
- Trolleys have a dual market of students and tourist
- Gateway Center good location for parking

Issues with the Corridor

The residents wanted to ensure the quality of life in the corridor and were wary of providing new modes of transportation because they feared that would add to the population and congestion of the area.

Traffic/Congestion/Access Management/Safety

Route 114

- West Main Road and Union Street – people cut across to avoid light
- Melville access Road and Two Mile Corner need 3rd turning lane
- Turning access on West Main Road
- Two Mile Corner to Coddington Highway – bumper to bumper
- Two Mile Corner to Valley and Coddington Highway needs turning lane
- Too many curb cuts
- Road unsafe for bike and pedestrian traffic
- Limited sidewalks
- Left hand turns
- Troubled intersection at Union Street and Red Wood Farms

Route 138

- Aquidneck Avenue and East Main Road in Middletown
- Turnpike Avenue and East Main Road in Portsmouth
- Left turn lanes needed
- Limited sidewalks
- Utility poles too close to road
- No breakdown lane

Car Travel

- Not enough enforcement of traffic regulations
- No east-west road connections or internal routes/would need traffic lights

Bus Service

- Block travel lanes
- Too many tour buses
- Pick up right at street putting riders and drivers behind bus in danger. Need to drive into shopping areas and developments
- No side walks to use while walking or waiting for bus
- Not enough service for commuter
- Not enough Park n' Ride locations
- Still have to drive to bus stop/park and ride
- Old buses cause pollution – environmental problem

Freight

- Old roads cannot handle the large trucks

Land Use and Sprawl

- Increasing recreational and commuter travel options would induce growth.

General Concerns

- Need for increased service for commuters
- Lack of sidewalks
- Air pollution
- Lack parking spaces for cars
- Increased population will create more traffic and cars

Issues Identified by Participants at End of Session

At the conclusion of the visioning session, participants were presented with a list of issues and asked to prioritize them. The following chart represents their priorities.

